InDesign Production Cookbook

By Alistair Dabbs, Anne-Marie Concepcion, Ken McMahon, Keith Martin, First Edition, November 2005, 224 Pages. O'Reilly, Sebastopol, CA (catalog page).
ISBN 0-596-10048-5 or 978-0-596-10048-3

Reviewed by Mike Morris
Front Range PC Users Group (FRPCUG),
This book is eligible for the User Group discount from O'Reilly

Rating: Timberline*

To describe this book as a print version of the help file--which it is--does not do this book justice. In addition to the "How to" of the help file, there is information, and many examples, on the "why" and the "when." For example, on page 36 there is a discussion of optical kerning. In that discussion is the following:

"...optical kerning is only really noticeable at large type sizes, so do not enable optical kerning for ordinary body text."

There are many more examples that will be helpful to both new users and experienced users of InDesign. You can examine some of them before you buy. Connect to Nested Styles. Note that the book is based on InDesign CS2. However, I have InDesign CS3, and I find it very helpful.

The book is filled with graphics and images to demonstrate the various features of InDesign--as you would expect, given the purpose of the application. I do, however, have two small criticisms.

First, the font size used for most of the body text is very small, and is gray, not black. That makes it hard to read for me (I wear glasses to correct for both nearsightedness and astigmatism).

Second, the page numbers are on the left/right edges of the pages, rather than in a traditional location. That, by itself, is not significant, but those numbers are knockouts from gradients, some of which are light colors. That makes some of those page numbers hard to read.

On the plus side, there is extensive information on these topics:

Text
Pictures/Drawings
Color
Transparency
and others, including 7 pages of information for Quark users, with a long list of keyboard shortcuts and the InDesign equivalents.

I found the section on Interactivity helpful, but, for me, I would like to see a little more information on the sequence of steps for creating hyperlinks, and for using words or phrases in a document in place of the complete URL.

The book is helpful and attractive. I recommend it.

*Ratings Key:

- Sandpit—Avoid
- Small hill—Not recommended
- Foothill—Average
- Timberline—Excellent
- Fourteener—Must have